

Executive Summary

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The Stakeholder Vision

In March 2004, a committee of transportation stakeholders representing a variety of interests convened to build the vision, goals and objectives for the development of SR 3 from the SR 305 interchange to SR 104 near the Hood Canal Bridge. Together they developed a fundamental vision for the route through the year 2030. Their vision, upon which they reached consensus, is:

SR 3: A safe, efficient, multimodal transportation system that, through the use of innovative design solutions, balances local and regional needs while retaining scenic qualities.

Over the course of the study, the Stakeholder Committee met five times. Based on their knowledge of the community, interpretation of transportation needs, and input received during the public meetings, the committee created a list of development goals that were consistent with the intent of the vision. The vision was maintained through each step of the study by the direct involvement of the Stakeholder Committee in the generation and approval of route development objectives, specific decision criteria and, ultimately, the Route Development Plan recommendations.

The committee's efforts were supported by information gathered about the study during three public meetings, and by technical reports prepared and presented by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Olympic Region Planning Office staff. The committee's decisions were made in direct consultation with these WSDOT representatives.

The Study

The subject of the study is the segment of SR 3 between the SR 305 interchange (MP 53.28) near Poulsbo and SR 104 (MP 60.02) near the Hood Canal Bridge. The two-lane highway is a north-south arterial serving north Kitsap County. It is a segment of an important regional route between the greater Seattle/Tacoma area and the Olympic Peninsula. It serves high volumes of recreational, commuter and freight traffic.

The study process involved review and analysis of technical information such as current and forecast traffic conditions and the accident history on the route. It had a public involvement component as well, consisting of five Stakeholder Committee meetings and three public meetings that generated great interest in the community. Using the technical analysis provided by WSDOT and the

information gathered through the public meeting process, the Stakeholder Committee endorsed recommendations to address the forecast deficiencies on the route. This Route Development Plan (RDP) provides WSDOT with a strategy for improving the route through the year 2030, while taking into consideration the plans and preferences of the affected jurisdictions and route users.

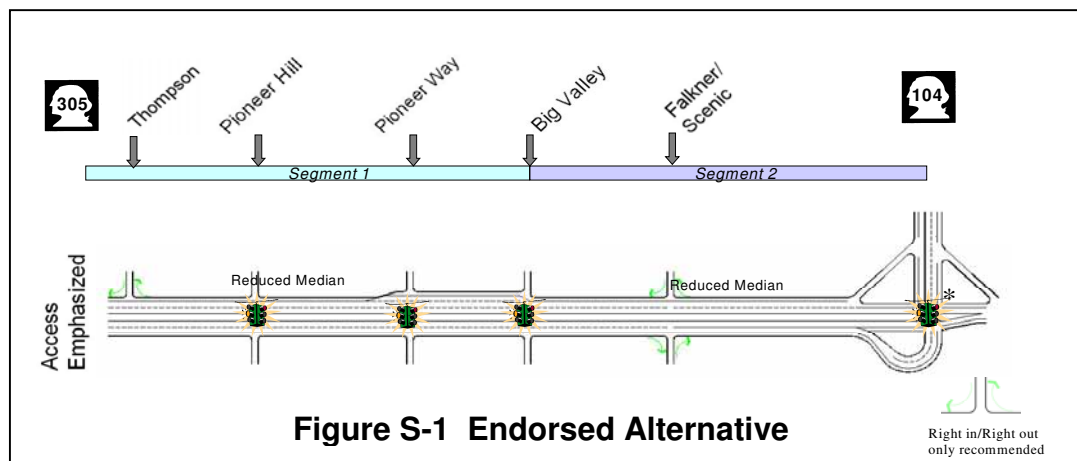
The Recommendation

The criteria for determining whether traffic congestion conditions warrant the construction of capacity improvements for Highway of Statewide Significance and National Highway System routes are established by the Washington State Department of Transportation. A technical analysis of the facility and expected traffic volumes provides a level of service (LOS) measurement. The minimum level of service value for routes like SR 3 has been set at “C.” Analysis for SR 3 shows that the route is currently operating at a LOS of “E,” and service will fall to “F” by the forecast year.

The recommendation endorsed by the Stakeholder Committee ensures that the level of service for the route will be improved to an acceptable level (LOS C).

In order to accommodate forecast traffic volumes at a level of service C, the full extent to the Study Route will have to be developed as a four-lane facility. Traffic volumes will also require a median barrier treatment under WAC 468-52-040. Given these requirements, the focus became deciding what configuration a four-lane facility should take.

Using the criteria developed through the stakeholder process, different four-lane alternatives were scored. The stakeholders endorsed an alternative that features a reduced-width median facility with right-in, right-out access at existing county roads and private drives, as shown in Figure S-1. Signals are recommended at Pioneer Hill Road, Pioneer Way and Big Valley Road, and should be installed as warrants are met and locations prioritize. A southbound climbing lane is recommended between Big Valley Road and vicinity Pioneer Way. WSDOT staff



met with emergency response agencies to determine where median barrier breaks and left-turn/U-turn opportunities are needed in order for them to continue to provide adequate service. These locations are documented in Chapter 4.

A recurring theme throughout the public involvement process was concern about traffic backing up on SR 3 when the Hood Canal Bridge opens for maritime traffic. The endorsed alternative includes reconstruction of the intersection of SR 3/SR 104. Currently there is a signal at a three-way intersection. The new design will create a “jughandle” configuration. A jughandle roadway will direct traffic headed for Hood Canal Bridge, approaching northbound on SR 3 in the right lane, onto a new east leg of the intersection. This will allow westbound traffic to move through the signalized intersection more safely. This configuration will also allow traffic northbound on SR 3 to continue on to Port Gamble in the left lane during bridge openings while westbound traffic queued in the right lane. For many years, a single lane jughandle roadway will operate efficiently. However, consideration should be given during project design for an expansion to two lanes - and eventually a flyover configuration - to handle forecast traffic volumes. See Figure S-2 for more project specific information.

As development occurs along the Study Route, a continuing effort should be made to coordinate with Kitsap County to identify where connections can be made between existing county roads in an effort to create a network of frontage and backage roads. The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of direct accesses onto SR 3. Of particular interest is a connecting road from Park Street to Kinman Road, with the goal of closing access from Park Street onto SR 3. Kitsap Memorial State Park is interested in changing the park entrance from Park Street to Kinman Road to allow recreational vehicles to enter and exit SR 3 at the signal at the Big Valley Road/Kinman Road intersection.

The list below shows how components of the endorsed alternative could be broken down into individual projects and the recommended construction sequence.

- Construct jughandle configuration at the intersection of SR 3 and SR 104 and the second northbound lane from Big Valley Road north to SR 104 to serve as a holding lane for traffic stopped for bridge openings.
- Construct southbound climbing lane between Big Valley Road and vicinity Pioneer Way.
- Change Kitsap Memorial State Park entrance from Park Street to Kinman Road, complete connecting road between Park Street and Kinman Road and close Park Street access to SR 3.
- Install traffic signals at Pioneer Hill Road, Pioneer Way, and Big Valley Road as they prioritize.
- Complete construction of the four-lane facility.

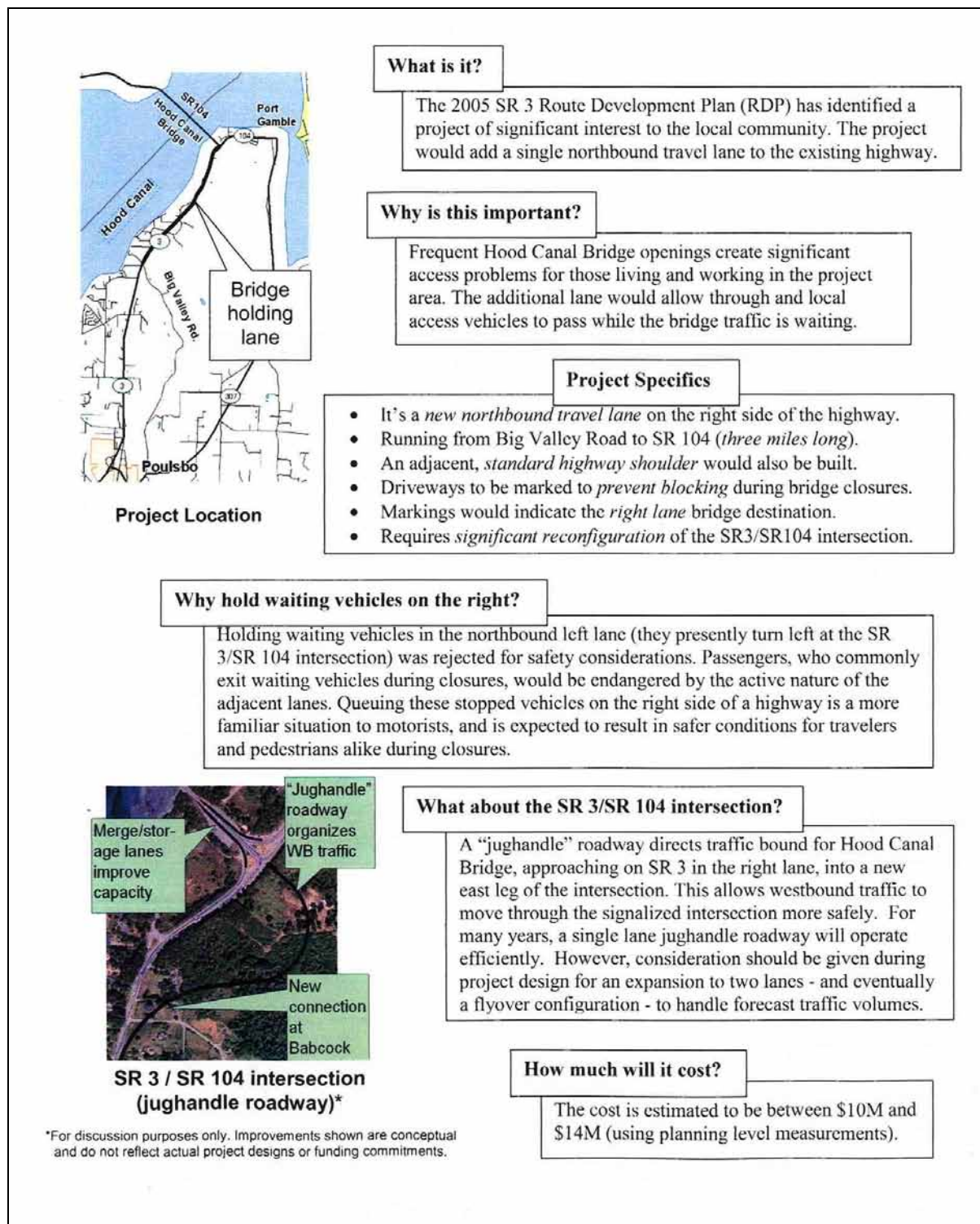


Figure S-2 Hood Canal Bridge Holding Lane

The Alternate Route

During the course of the SR 3 route development study, there was persistent interest, expressed mainly by those who lived on or near the route, about the possibility of constructing a bypass route. The conceptual route departed the existing SR 3 in the vicinity of the SR 3/ SR 305 interchange, crossed Big Valley to the east, ran north and parallel to SR 3, and ended at SR 104 at the Hood Canal Bridge.

The feasibility of such a route had previously been explored, and additional information about such a route was gathered. Limiting features included apparently unavoidable geologically unstable slopes, and probable impacts to wetlands in the vicinity of Big Valley, Dogfish Creek (site of extensive salmon recovery projects and of particular importance to the Suquamish Tribe), and the watershed that is the source of the public water supply for the city of Poulsbo. Input received from Washington State Truckers' Association Olympic Peninsula members also indicated that the length and steepness of the grades necessary could inhibit the route's utility for freight. It is important to note that State Representatives Beverly Woods and Phil Rockefeller expressed opposition to development of the bypass corridor. Chris Endresen, County Commissioner representing the north Kitsap area, submitted a letter expressing her opposition to constructing a highway through Big Valley. She cited unacceptable environmental damage and the fact that the county's comprehensive plan and zoning does not support it as the basis for her opposition.

A bypass would also have the potential to impact other elements of the transportation network including SR 104, SR 307, SR 305 and the county road network. A larger study would be necessary to determine the need for a new highway corridor, and consistency with the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan policy that the existing road network should be improved before considering new corridors. Should the need for a new corridor be established, an environmental impact statement would be necessary to determine where such a route would be located.

The bypass alternative was scored in a comparative manner using the same criteria applied to other development alternatives. The bypass alternative did not score as well as the endorsed alternative. The Stakeholder Committee considered including the recommendation for a comprehensive study of the transportation network in north Kitsap County to determine the need for a new highway corridor. However, they unanimously decided not to recommend such a study, which would most likely take many years to fund and complete, because it might delay the construction of needed improvements to SR 3.